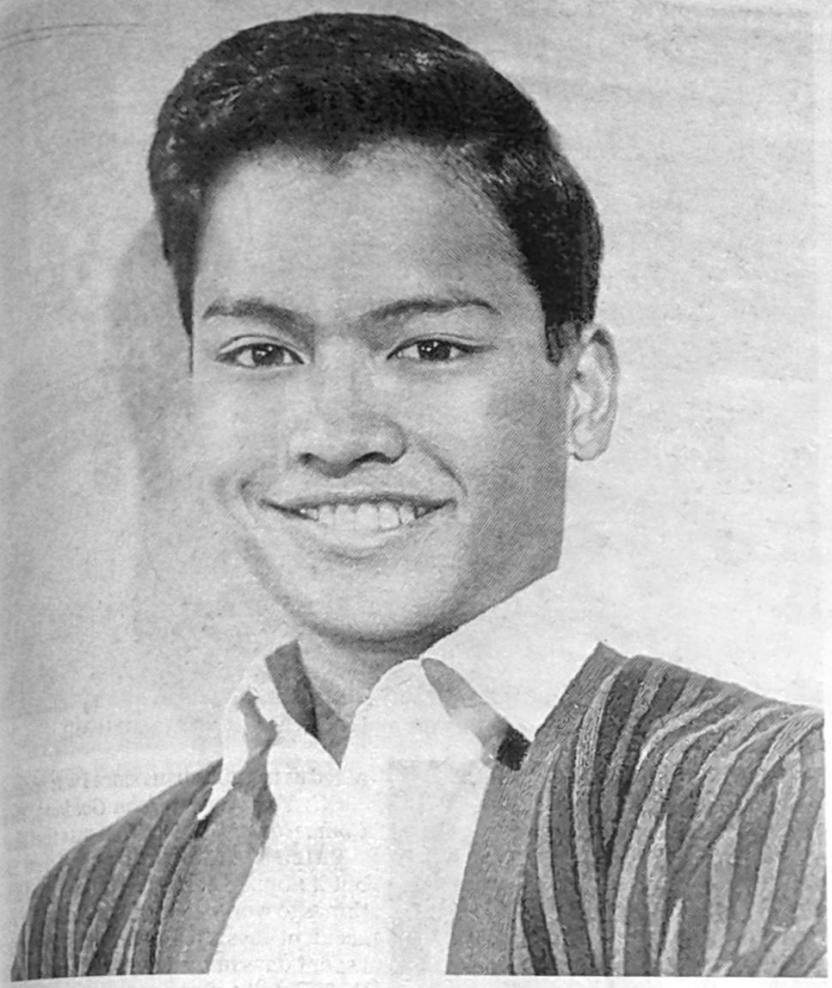


Yul Brynner and Patrick Adiarte in The King and I (1956).

Patrick Adiarte

Q&A

SAMUEL CLAESSON

Patrick Robert Adiarte, a Philippine-born entertainer whose career spanned several decades, has portrayed different ethnicities onscreen with much success. He was Korean on *M*A*S*H,* Samoan on *Ironside*, Native-American on *Bonanza*, and Vietnamese on *CBS Playhouse*. His father was an officer in World War II, while his mother was a ballerina. When he was a year old, he immigrated to the United States with his mother and sister. He started on Broadway in *The King and I* and *Flower Drum Song*, later also appearing in the film versions. The reviews from critics were always positive. He had additional success on television with critically-acclaimed roles in *Hullabaloo*, *The Brady Bunch*, and *Hawaii Five-O*. His versatility as a performer, combined with his talent and energy, made him one of the most prolific entertainers of the 1960s. He is still popular with audiences. Anyone who uses Facebook can join the Patrick Adiarte Fan Club, which was founded fifteen years ago.

Samuel Clemens: Can you tell us how you got your first onstage role?

Patrick Adiarte: My mother took me to an audition for *The King and I* on Broadway. They needed a replacement because Sal Mineo was leaving. He was cast in a film with Tony Curtis. Yul [Brynner] wanted someone who looked similar to him, which is partly why he cast me. My mother was cast, as well. I was in different versions of *The King and I* onstage for years until we began production of the onscreen version. It was an easy transition since I was the same character. It was a career-changing role, but I was typecast afterwards. If you see my credits, I portrayed a prince in several things that I did.

SC: In addition to *The King and I* (1956), you did Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Flower Drum Song* (1961)

Patrick Adiarte: I hold the distinction of being the only actor to appear in both the Broadway and Hollywood versions of two Rodgers and Hammerstein productions. They thought that I did well in *The King and I*, so they had me do *Flower Drum Song*. I didn't even have to audition.

SC: Do you have any interesting stories about your castmates, Nancy Kwan, Reiko Sato, or James Hong?

Patrick Adiarte: Nancy and I are still good friends. Reiko had a difficult life. She began to struggle mentally after being sexually assaulted by some of the islanders at Tetiaroa. That was Marlon Brando's island. She was a close companion of his, and he sent her there to keep an eye on things while he was planning to build property on it. I didn't get to know James Hong well because we were in different scenes, but I got annoyed with him because he tried flirting with my girlfriend on the set.

SC: How do you feel about the criticism of *Flower Drum Song* being offensive to the Asian-American community?

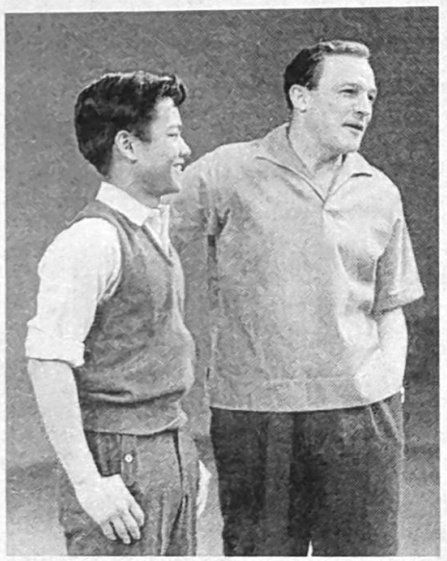
Patrick Adiarte: I think that is nonsense. I watched it recently, and I can't find anything inappropriate that we did. I don't understand this wokeness. It implies that we've been asleep, which we haven't.

SC: How were you cast in *High Time* (1960) with Bing Crosby? Did you like working with him? How about Yvonne Craig?

Tuesday Weld, Bing Crosby, Richard Beymer, Fabian and Patrick Adiarte in High Time (1960).

Patrick Adiarte, Cherylene Lee, and Virginia Ann Lee in Flower Drum Song (1961).

Ivan Dixon, Tina Chen and Patrick Adiarte on a 1967 CBS Playhouse, "The Final War of Olly Winter."



Adiarte on the television program Omnibus, "Dancing: A Man's Game" (1958), with Gene Kelly. Kelly directed Adiarte in the 1958 Broadway production of Flower Drum Song.

Patrick Adiarte: I did a nine-week leave of absence from *Flower Drum Song* to do *High Time*. They were planning to end it anyways as we'd been onstage for two years. I remember that Bing was a generous man. I saw him watching something on a portable television between rehearsals. As I admired it, he said, "You can have it" and he gave it to me. I was very close to Yvonne. While my mother was away, she and her husband acted as my guardians since I was underage.

SC: You were in *John Goldfarb, Please Come Home!* (1965). What was that like?

Patrick Adiarte: It was a great film, but it flopped at the box office. I had other things to worry about, though. I got in a car accident days after we finished filming, and I spent days in the hospital. I was thankful that I didn't suffer any career-ending injuries. Shirley MacLaine starred in that film. She was an interesting person. The director [J. Lee Thompson] would have to track her down because she would go on walks between rehearsals. She was—and probably still is—a very spiritual person.

SC: How were you cast in *Hullabaloo*?

Patrick Adiarte: I was staying with my mother and sister in New York recovering from my car accident when David Winters stopped by. He was an award-winning choreographer who was hired to do *Hullabaloo*. I didn't even have to audition for it. It was one of my favorite projects because I got to do a lot of singing.

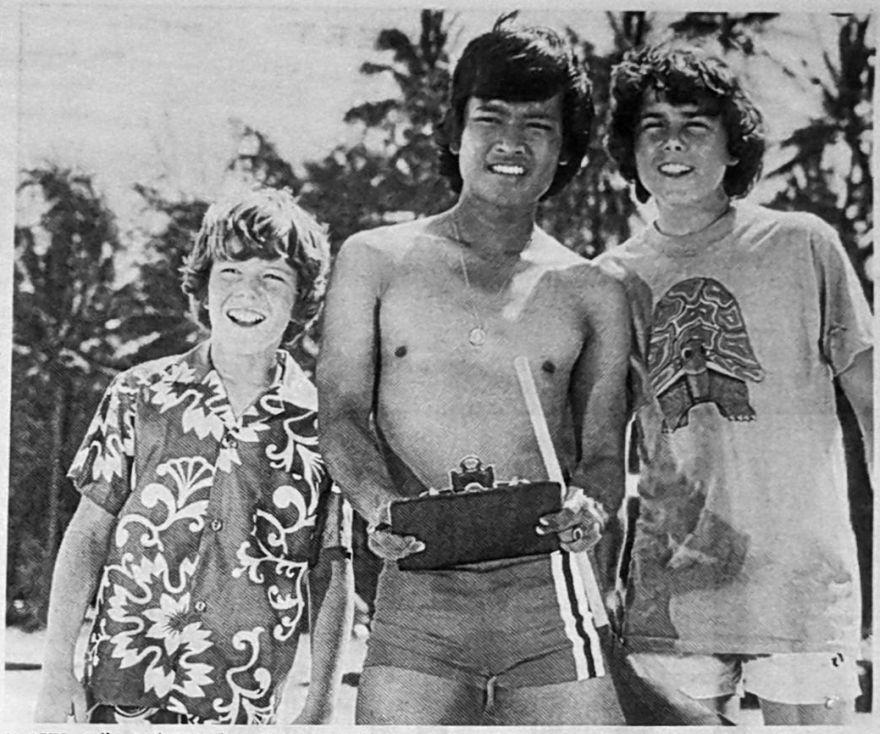
SC: Was there anyone you liked on that series? How about someone you disliked?

Patrick Adiarte: We had a revolving door of guests, so I was always meeting new people. I will say that I didn't like Jerry Lewis. I did an episode with him and he was arrogant. He was a smoker, and he'd throw his cigarettes in the air. He had someone following him who'd dispose of the cigarettes. I found it to be presumptuous.

SC: How about *M*A*S*H*?

Patrick Adiarte: I did several episodes

Chief Dan George, Patrick Adiarte and Michael Landon on the 1971 episode "Warbonnet" on Bonanza.



In 1972, Adiarte (center) appeared on the Brady Bunch's season-four opener, "Hawaii Bound," and its second-part conclusion, "Pass the Tabu." Mike Lookinland is on the left, Christopher Knight on the right.

as Ho-Jon. It was a great character that was popular with audiences. As we approached the end of the season, the script had my character leaving to attend college. I felt that there was some potential there to keep my character in the series, but the writers didn't seem to think so.

SC: Do you still keep in touch with your castmates?

Patrick Adiarte: I do not. The last one I saw was Alan Alda. This was in the 1980s and I had become dependent on alcohol. My friend and I had left a bar and I started puking on the sidewalk. He saw Alan across the street and started waving at him. It wasn't my greatest moment.

SC: What did you do after leaving Hollywood?

Patrick Adiarte: I did choreography for a while. I taught at Santa Monica College and the Hollywood Dance Center. I retired recently because of some knee issues.

SC: You were briefly married to Loni Ackerman, who was in *Annie* (1982). Can you tell us about that?

Patrick Adiarte: She's the reason I never got married again. We were together for a few years. I helped prepare her for her audition of *Evita* on Broadway, which she got. I never got remarried, but I have a girlfriend who's a professional ballerina. We've been together for years, and she is wonderful.

Words To...New BEN CASEY Song / YOUR LETTERS TO LIZ
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MAKE-UP FOR SWIMMING

Teen Time Magazine, August 1962.

SC: Would you return to acting if given the opportunity?

Patrick Adiarte: I don't see that happening since I don't dance anymore. I was always a dancer who happened to be a decent actor. I never studied acting. I learned it by doing it. I had a career that lasted a lot longer than I ever expected in an industry where most people can't even get an audition. I am forever grateful for that.

In 1975 and '76, Adiarte played the character Ho-Jon in seven episodes of the TV series M*A*S*H.